



UC-AFT
Local 1966
UC-Riverside

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Whither UC-AFT

Arlen Appleford

Last March, when it finally seemed that CFT and AFT would never fulfill their obligations to us, Council officers and local reps decided to seriously consider disaffiliation. This decision had followed nearly a year of earnest discussion of the possibilities that lay before us, a union chronically troubled by lack of resource.

In June when we met again, our affiliates' intentions had not changed, and so we set the vote on disaffiliation, which has to be approved by the entire membership, for October 15. We did leave the usual door open, however, saying that if CFT came up with a proposal of support that we could live with over the summer, we could reconsider the vote in the fall. None of us, I think, really expected at the time to have to do that.

And yet at the fall meeting, there was a counter-proposal from CFT on the table that for all the world looked like a serious response to our own proposals. Perhaps the most important condition of the offer was rebate of eighty-five percent of membership dues, or \$124,000. This amount would pay for two labor organizers, one for the northern region, and one for the southern. And these positions would do more than anything

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The TA Strike and Lecturers

Barbara Gable

By now, everyone has seen the picket lines around the UCR bell tower and knows that the teaching assistants at UCR, as well as at seven other UC campuses, are on strike, a last resort to gain recognition of their union, CASE-UAW, and the collective bargaining rights that go with such recognition. So far, the Chancellor has refused to meet with the TAs, and the university persists in denying them the rights of employees, calling them instead student apprentices learning to teach under their faculty mentors. This is a laughable claim, given the minute amount of mentoring that is offered in most departments and the heavy burdens that are placed on TAs. TAs are indeed students, pursuing degrees that may have little to do with their teaching, but they are also employees, an essential part of the work force at UC. Without them, introductory courses in majors, language courses, and English composition courses would not get taught.

What is the UC-AFT's position on the strike? We, of course, support unionization of all job categories at UC. Only through unions can employees deal with a powerful, arrogant, and

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else to increase the strength of the union by making steady, ongoing recruitment possible.

The legislative staff member assigned to higher education legislative affairs would devote 35-40 percent of his/her time to UC-AFT related matters (in the past it has been virtually none), addressing, at long last, HEERA reform. In addition, there would be one project to strengthen our bargaining position in the university as preparation for the next contract negotiation and another to increase the percentage of unionized workers throughout the system, thereby improving the lot of all of us.

But of course there was a catch. These conditions were to be had by us for two years only. After that, CFT could go back to being itself (AFT has never really been anything else), and we could find ourselves back at the chimney, in rags, and with no glass slipper. Two years, after all, isn't very long to accomplish the growth we need in order to better our position in bargaining with the university; and if there were to be no extension of these conditions, we could find ourselves once again faced with the decision we're agonizing over now.

So we said that we could cancel the October vote and consider the CFT proposal, with modification. And that's pretty much where we are now, and have been since September. Ed Purcell, our labor relations advisor, felt that the CFT proposal, with the modifications we asked for, was a sound offer, as good a one as we might get if we were to disaffiliate and start the affiliation process over. But nothing is settled yet, and in the continued silence of the executive board, the ifs grow more pronounced, rather than less so.

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stingy administration. We urge the Chancellor to meet with any and all UCR employees and to keep the lines of communication open.

Unionization will benefit the university as well as its employees because workers will be more satisfied and thus work more effectively.

Despite the UC-AFT's position on unionization, you won't see UC-AFT members, either lecturers or librarians, carrying picket signs at the bell tower. The Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) for both Units 17 and 18 contain No Strike or No Concerted Activities articles, meaning that, not only can we not strike, we can not support any strike affecting the university. For example, the Unit 18 MOU states "The UC-AFT, on behalf of its officers, agents, and members, agrees that it shall not in any way directly or indirectly authorize, assist, encourage, participate in, sanction, ratify, condone, or lend support to any activities by members of this unit..." We were recently reminded of these stipulations in a letter from Peter Chester of the Office of the President to the UC-AFT Labor Consultant, Ed Purcell.

The language of the MOU, however, also protects members of the unit from exploitation during a strike. Certainly doing the TAs' work is assisting them and lending support, something we are forbidden to do by our MOU. There have been several reports of departments soliciting volunteers from among the lecturers to take over a TAs class. We have even heard of lecturers being told they must do this work. In fact, the Press-Enterprise for Dec. 4 quoted Jack Chappell, "UCR spokesman," as saying, "In some cases, lecturers may have been brought in to lead discussions or professors have been filling in." Such bringing in of lecturers is grievable since there is no provision in the Unit 18 MOU for volunteer labor or assignment of extra duties,

whether paid or not. Ed Purcell has sent a memo to Peter Chester stating our position. If you as a lecturer or anyone you know in Unit 18 has been asked or told to fill in for striking TAs in any way, please contact Arlen Appleford (909-686-1632) immediately.

Coalition of Unions Meets at UCR

Deloy Simper

On Nov. 11 representatives from several unions on campus met and exchanged information about their respective group's current activities. Attending were members from UPTE (University Professional and Technical Employees), CUE (Coalition of University Employees), CASE (Coalition of Allied Student Employees), and AFT (American Federation of Teachers).

UPTE members announced a quiet action planned during the official opening of the campus's new science library on November 17. They also told of their ongoing membership drive and their concerns about the increased number of casual appointments of researchers and technicians at UCR.

Members of CUE reported on their current contract talks with the University and they told of problems they are encountering in the negotiation process. They announced that UCR is hosting the next bargaining session at University Extension on Dec. 2 and 3; they invited those interested to attend and observe the bargaining process in action.

CASE representatives told the group of their latest efforts, systemwide, to gain recognition as a negotiation unit to represent teaching assistants and readers. They reported that a strike is planned for the end of the quarter if the

University refuses to talk with CASE officials. CASE has affiliation with and support from the UAW (United Automobile, Aerospace, and Agricultural Implement Workers of America), which has pledged hardship funds to assist striking student workers systemwide.

The AFT delegate reported that members of their local had recently attended a systemwide coalition meeting held at UCLA where most campuses were well represented by the several unions active throughout the UC system. Locally AFT continues to recruit senate faculty, as well as lecturer faculty, librarians, and supervisors of teacher education.

The lunchtime meeting ended with those present encouraged by the range of professional workers at UCR represented by their unions, and all agreed that they welcomed more activities which would bring them together to work on common concerns.

Senate Faculty Coalition Plans Revitalization

Edna Bonacich

On November 21 the UC-AFT held a meeting with members of the academic senate from all the UC campuses except Davis to explore the potential for resuscitating this branch of the union. Before recognition was won by the librarians and lecturers campus locals had many active senate members. In those days, the union focused on such issues as open files for tenure review cases, and the use of agricultural research to foster the interests of agribusiness at the expense of farm workers. The union provided legal assistance to tenure track faculty fighting discrimination and tenure cases. And, at the local level, it provided faculty with a forum for

discussing campus issues and for sharing teaching philosophies.

When collective bargaining was won by the librarians and lecturers, the union devoted most of its energies to fighting for strong contracts, and the concerns of academic senate members moved to the background. Still, many senate faculty continued to remain members of UC-AFT and continued to pay dues to the union. Today around 250 of these members are found throughout the UC system.

The purpose of the November 21 meeting was to see if we want to become active in the union again, and to build a presence of union affiliated faculty in the UC system. A lively discussion ensued regarding issues that we care about and think might concern other senate faculty. Among these were such issues as the corporatization and privatization of the university, and the problem of intellectual property with the development of electronic teaching.

UC-AFT is going to be hiring organizers for the northern and southern campuses to begin organizing senate faculty, among other things. It was felt that, should the union become active with this sector, there are a number of faculty who would join without hesitation and the need for persuasion. Once we sign up a core group, each campus should call a meeting of its membership and begin to develop an organization and an agenda for action.

The meeting spent a fair amount of time discussing the impending teaching assistants' strike. We compared notes, revealing that the UCR administration was taking among the most threatening of postures. Faculty from each of the campuses shared their strategies for supporting the student workers, giving each of us some good ideas to take back with us.

The clear result of the meeting is that there is enthusiasm for developing a senate faculty unit within the UC-AFT, to begin a serious organizing

drive, and to develop plans for the issues for which we will fight. This should help to strengthen all of the locals and the UC-AFT as a whole. Look out, here we come!

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CONTACT ANY OFFICER FOR INFORMATION ABOUT MEMBERSHIP

ABOUT THE SLATEBOARD

This newsletter is funded by Local 1966 of the University Council-American Federation of Teachers. It appears quarterly and is distributed to all teaching faculty, librarians, and union local presidents on the UCR campus. The editors will print articles on labor relations and other matters of interest to these groups.

The editorial board is made up of members of Local 1966. Opinions are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the editorial board. We encourage submissions of articles and letters from other members of the campus community. Bring items to the editor, Barbara Gable, English.